(a) what measures have been taken or are proposed to be taken by Government for removal of sickness as well for all round development of North-Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC);

(b) whether Government are planning to set-up more food processing industries under NERAMAC;

(c) if so, which places have been selected for the purpose and on what criterion; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons for the decision against expansion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) The Government/ BIFR have sanctioned a rehabilitation scheme for the all-round development of NERAMAC.

(b) and (c) These are plans for setting up of food processing industries in the north eastern region either under NERAMAC or as joint ventures of NERAMAC and State Government Agencies/private sector. The type of food processing industries and their locations will depend on the regular availability of raw material and suitable production and marketing infrastructure.

(d) Does not arise.

Crop Insurance Scheme in Himachal Pradesh

1546. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Crop Insurance Scheme has been implemented in Himachal Pradesh at Block level for poor farmers of the State;

(b) if so, whether it covers fruit agriculture like apples, etc.;

(c) if so, from which date it has been implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. A National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) covering all farmers (both loanee and non-loanee) growing cereals, millets, pulses and oilseeds and annual commercial/ horticultural crops has been implemented in Himachal Pradesh from Rabi 1999-2000 at Tehsil/Sub-Tehsil/Block level.

(b) to (d) No Sir. NAIS does not cover perennial fruit crops like apple etc. The perennial crops for the time being are not included under the scheme because of their longer life span, as compared to the annual crops. However, insurance policies covering perennial crops like apple and other horticultural/ plantation crops are available with subsidiary companies of the General Insurance Corporation of India.

Agriculture science centres

†1547. PROF. RAM BAKHSH SINGH VARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to set up more agricultural science centres to provide more and more knowledge on cultivation to the farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of funds allocated for this purpose in Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have established 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) in the country. The activities of which include technology evaluation and assessment of its impact through on-farm testing and frontline demonstration, and its dissemination through training of farmers, and inservice personnel.

In addition to this, the Council is considering to strengthen the existing Zonal Agricultural Research Stations (ZARS) to take up the additional functions of KVK in 53 districts where there is no KVK, to provide strong linkage between technology generation, assessment and refinement and dissemination. The details are given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(c) A total of Rs. 200.00 crores has been allocated for the existing KVKs and Rs. 10.78 crores for strengthening the selected ZARSs during the Ninth Plan.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.